

History of the U. S. South

University of Nebraska

William G. Thomas III

Spring 2016

Cape Charles Light, Cape Charles, Virginia, 1900. Eastern Shore Public Library.

HIST 365
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University of Nebraska
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Course Description:

This course covers the history and development of the U.S. South from colonial times to the 20th century. The South as a region has set the pace of economic growth in the late twentieth century U.S. and risen to political prominence recently as the proving ground of all presidential candidates. The South's grip on the economic, social, religious, political, and cultural character of the U.S. has been long and deep. This course will broadly survey the development of the South as a region and examine its context in the growth of the Atlantic World, the United States, and other regions and cultures.

The formation and consequences of racial and regional identities, first, are at the center of this course. Second, this course explores the encounters of Southerners of all ethnicities with the changing, modernizing world economy and society. Chronological treatments include the following major subjects: the encounter of Indian, European, and African c. 1607, the development of slavery as a labor system, the meaning and legacy of the Civil War, the development of segregation, the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, the persistence of sub-regions in the South, especially Appalachia, and the emergence of the "Sun Belt" South. This course will use a wide array of digital history projects for students to investigate primary sources--letters, diaries, newsreel films, photographs, and maps from and about the region. Students of all backgrounds are welcome in this course to learn about the U.S. South and its history.

Course Objectives:

- to give students the experience and opportunity to do history for themselves and participate in it through gathering evidence, communicating ideas, and engaging with historical scholarship.
- to improve fluency and proficiency in and historical thinking, essay writing, and critical analysis.

- to develop knowledge of the history of the American South as a region and the Atlantic World context of its development from 1570 to the present--the events, structures, ideas, and people that shaped the region and their relevance today.

Course Readings:

Books:

Stephen Innes and T. H. Breen, *Myne Owne Ground: Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore*
 Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market*
 Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom*
 Steven Ash, *A Year in the South 1865*
 Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*
 Edward L. Ayers and Bradley Mittendorf, *The Oxford Book of the American South*

Selected Essays:

[Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.](#)

["New Pasts: Historicizing Immigration, Race, and Place in the South," Jamie Winders and Barbara Ellen Smith, *Southern Spaces*](#)

["Low Wage Legacies, Race and the Golden Chicken in Mississippi: Where Contemporary Immigration Meets African American Labor History," Angela Stuesse and Laura F. Helton, *Southern Spaces*](#)

["Mountaintop Removal in Central Appalachia," Shirley Stewart Burns, *Southern Spaces*](#)

["No Place to be Displaced: Katrina Response and the Deep South's Political Economy," Lynn Weber, *Southern Spaces*](#)

["Katrina +5: An X-Code Exhibition," Dorothy Moya, *Southern Spaces*](#)

Required Electronic Archives:

Center for Digital Research in the Humanities, UNL—<http://cdrh.unl.edu>

- [*O Say Can You See: Early Washington, D.C. Law and Family*](#)

Virginia Center for Digital History/UVA

- [*Virtual Jamestown*](#)
- [*Geography of Slavery*](#)
- [*Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*](#)
- [*Civil Rights Television News Archive*](#)

Emory University

- [*Southern Spaces*](#)

University of Richmond Digital Scholarship Lab—<http://dsl.richmond.edu/projects/>

- [*Visualizing Emancipation*](#)

Films:

Gone with the Wind

Beasts of the Southern Wild

Grading:

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Five-page Review Essay 1 | 200 points |
| Five-page Review Essay 2 | 200 points |
| Five-page Review Essay 3 | 200 points |
| Final Exam | 200 points |
| Assignments (5/7) | 100 points |
| Attendance/Participation | 100 points |
| | ===== |
| | 1000 points |
| Extra Credit | 100 points |

Extra Credit Opportunity

Research and find a historic recipe (pre-1960), using original sources and documents. Prepare the dish and bring it to class to share, provide a 7-minute overview of the historical significance of this recipe and how it relates to at least one reading in the course. Turn in the recipe with the citation to the original sources—the more obscure the better.

See “The Recipes Project” for ideas. See “Documenting the American South” Project for original printed sources such as Mary Ann Bryan Mason’s *The Young Housewife’s Counsellor and Friend*; *The Confederate Receipt Book: A Compilation of over One Hundred Receipts*. See Internet Archive for other sources such as, Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife or Methodical Cook* or Emma and William McKinney, *Aunt Caroline’s Dixieland Recipes*. See also volumes or diaries in various southern state libraries and archives digital collections, such as University of South Carolina Digital Collections or the Louisiana Digital Library (browse for “recipe”). Or use iris.unl.edu Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers to search by state for “recipe”—this turns up many excellent examples.

Academic Policies:

Attendance and Participation: Attendance at all lectures and class periods is required. Note taking in class is strongly encouraged. Participation in discussion appropriate for an upper level history course includes regularly contributions, at least once a week with extended contributions that demonstrate a thorough engagement with the readings.

Timely Completion of Work: Essays will not be accepted in email format or as attachments, only as hard copy handed in at the class session they are due. Assignments will not be accepted after the due dates except in cases where students can document an illness, family emergency, or university-related responsibility that prevented them from completing the assignment on time.

Communication: Students are expected to use Blackboard in this course and to follow their email correspondence regularly during the semester to stay informed on any changes in the course syllabus.

Academic Resources: The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Writing Center can provide you with meaningful support as you write for this class as well as for every course in which you enroll. Trained peer consultants are available to talk with you as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please check the Writing Center website for locations, hours, and information about scheduling appointments. (<http://www.unl.edu/writing/>)

Academic Accommodation: Students with disabilities or in need of academic accommodation are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to adhere to the University policies regarding academic honesty set forth in the Undergraduate Bulletin. Cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation) will be handled in strict accordance with the guidelines of the University. Violations of academic honesty will result in an F in the course and referral to the Dean of Students.

Academic Freedom: Academic freedom of expression is essential to reasoned discourse, learning, and scholarship. Students will be expected at all times to engage in analysis and discussion in an atmosphere of cordiality, respect, honor, and dignity. Students will be expected to consider complex issues and controversial topics with respect for views that may differ from their own. Students should be familiar with and consult the following important resources in the Office of Student Affairs at the University of Nebraska, describing the rights and responsibilities of both students and faculty in the classroom:

1. The Student Code of Conduct-- <http://stuaafs.unl.edu/ja/code/>
2. The Student in the Academic Community--Classroom Rights and Responsibilities
<http://stuaafs.unl.edu/ja/community/two.shtml>

Grading Scale

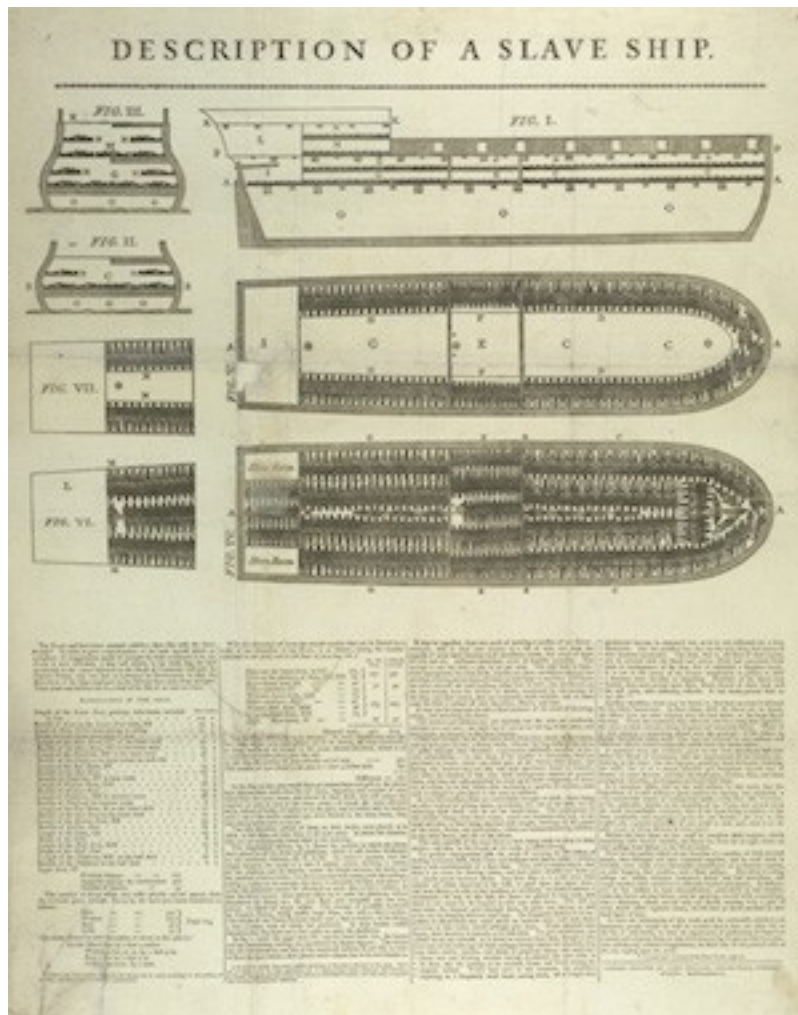
| | | | |
|----|--------|----|----------|
| A+ | 97-100 | C+ | 77-79 |
| A | 94-96 | C | 74-76 |
| A- | 90-93 | C- | 70-73 |
| B+ | 87-89 | D+ | 67-69 |
| B | 84-86 | D | 64-66 |
| B- | 80-83 | D- | 60-63 |
| | | F | below 60 |

Schedule of Assignments:

(note: all assignments and due dates are subject to change as necessary in the semester)

Week 1: Problems in Southern History

- 1/11 *Oxford Book of the American South (OBAS)*--Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*
- 1/13 *Oxford Book of the American South (OBAS)*-- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* and Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
- 1/15 *Oxford Book of the American South (OBAS)*-- Peter Taylor, *The Decline and Fall of the Episcopal Church*



Description of a Slave Ship, "Brookes," 1787. James Phillips, George Yard. London. British Library

Week 2: The Atlantic South

1/18 Encounters in the Chesapeake and Atlantic World

Virtual Jamestown-- what were the first encounters like between English, African, and Native Americans in the Chesapeake? Select critical passages to document and explain three (3) encounters. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.
<http://www.virtualjamestown.org>

1/20 Land, Labor, and Race in the Colonies

1/22 Discussion of Breen and Innes, *Myne Owne Ground*

Week 3: The Expansion of Slavery

1/25 Tobacco Culture

The Geography of Slavery--Using examples from runaway ads and the Carter Family Correspondence (<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos/slaveHolderRecords/carterFamily.php>) briefly explain the culture of the Chesapeake gentry. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss your findings in class. [http:// www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos.html](http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/gos.html)

1/27 Plantation Societies

1/29 The Transatlantic Slave Trade

Reading Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*

Week 4: The Revolutionary South

2/1 Revolutionaries

Papers of George Washington--Road to Revolution Letters--why do white planter Virginians participate in a revolution? Find three (3) reasons in Washington's correspondence and briefly explain. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.
<http://gwpapers.virginia.edu/documents/revolution/letters/index.html>

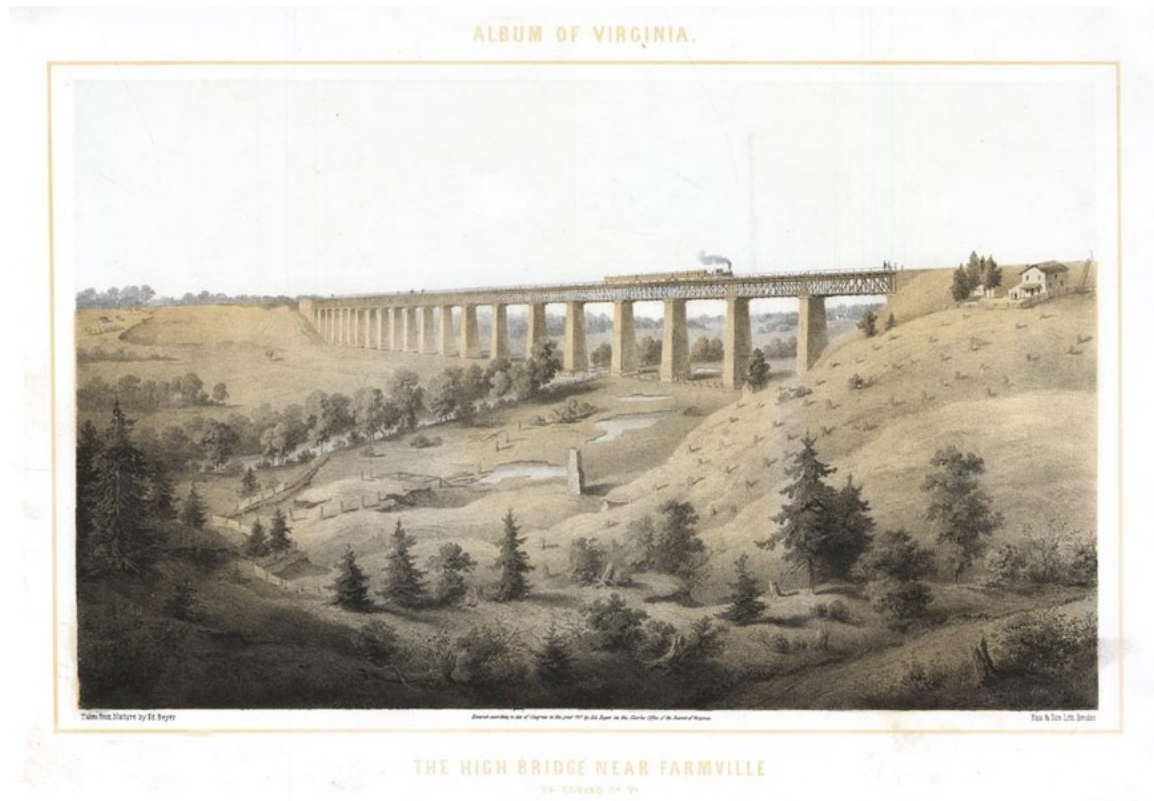
2/3 Revolutionary Aftermath

2/6 Discussion of Melvyn Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox*

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Week 5: Nineteenth-century South

First Five-page Review Essay--write a critical review of one of the books assigned for this course so far (Breen and Inness or Ely) with reference to at least 5 other readings/documents in this course. Due 2/8 beginning of class.



“The High Bridge Near Farmville,” Edward Beyer, *Album of Virginia*, 1858. Library of Virginia.

2/8 Defining Slavery

OBAS--Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*;
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

2/10 Slavery and the Cotton South

2/12 Religion

Reading Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul*

Week 6: Resistance

2/15 Family, Law, and the Slave Market

O Say Can You See: Early Washington, D.C. Law and Family--Pick one case and explore how and in what ways African American litigants used the law to resist enslavement. Post to Blackboard Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

2/17 Slave Revolts

2/19 Discussion of Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul*

Week 7: Civil War

2/22 Politics of Secession

Valley of the Shadow--select three documents of (3) different types (newspaper, letter, diary, census record, will, . . .) in the period 1857-1861 from Augusta County, Virginia, to explain the ways that southern whites rationalized, defended, or explained slavery and discuss their significance. Was there a difference between private and public expression regarding slavery? Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

2/24 The Confederate States of America

2/26 The War

Reading Stephen Ash, *A Year in the South 1865*

Week 8: Emancipation

2/29 The Meanings of Emancipation

Visualizing Emancipation--select three (3) events in one place or topic--evaluate their relationship to one another. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.

3/2 The Success and Failure of Reconstruction

3/4 Discussion of Stephen Ash, *A Year in the South 1865*

Week 9: Reconstruction

3/7 The Violence of Reconstruction

OBAS--Black Citizens of Tennessee, *Letter to the Union Convention*;
Charles Chestnut, *Dave's Necklace*

3/9 The End of Reconstruction and The Lost Cause

3/11 Sheldon Museum of Art Visit

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Week 10: Race and Region

Second Five-page Review Essay--write a critical review of one of the books assigned for this unit (Johnson or Ash) with reference to at least 5 other readings/documents in this course. Due 3/14 beginning of class.



Martin Luther King and James J. Kilpatrick, NBC "The Nation's Future," November 26, 1960, debate "Are the Sit-In Strikes Justifiable?"

3/14 The New South

OBAS--Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery*

3/16 The Progressive South

OBAS-- W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*; Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand*

3/18 Southern Literature

OBAS-- Margaret Mitchell, *Gone with the Wind*; William Faulkner, *Wash*

SPRING BREAK

Week 11: Depression South

3/28 Tenants and Sharecroppers/Mills and Mines

OBAS--James Agee, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*

3/30 Prisons and the Legal System

4/1 Race and Ideology

[Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*. Ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982.](#)

Reading Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

Week 12: Civil Rights Beginnings

4/4 Jim Crow and Origins of Civil Rights Movement

4/6 *Rising Up* Film (in class)

4/8 Discussion: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Parts I and II

Week 13: Civil Rights Movement

4/11 Brown v. Board and Massive Resistance

Television News of the Civil Rights Era--select three (3) films that reveal

the key components of the struggle for black freedom and equality, both resistance to change and pressure to change. Submit post to Blackboard Discussion Thread and prepare to discuss in class.
<http://www.vcdh.virginia.edu/civilrightstv>

4/13 Black Freedom Struggle in the 60s

4/15 Discussion: Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Parts III and IV



Barber Shop, located in Ninth Ward, New Orleans, Carole M. Highsmith, April 13, 2006. Library of Congress

Week 14: Post South?

4/18 Sunbelt South

["New Pasts: Historicizing Immigration, Race, and Place in the South,"](#)
[Jamie Winders and Barbara Ellen Smith, *Southern Spaces*](#)

or

["Low Wage Legacies, Race and the Golden Chicken in Mississippi: Where Contemporary Immigration Meets African American Labor History,"](#)
[Angela Stuesse and Laura F. Helton, *Southern Spaces*](#)

4/20 Appalachian South

["Mountaintop Removal in Central Appalachia," Shirley Stewart Burns, Southern Spaces](#)

4/22 Hurricane Katrina

["No Place to be Displaced: Katrina Response and the Deep South's Political Economy," Lynn Weber, Southern Spaces](#)

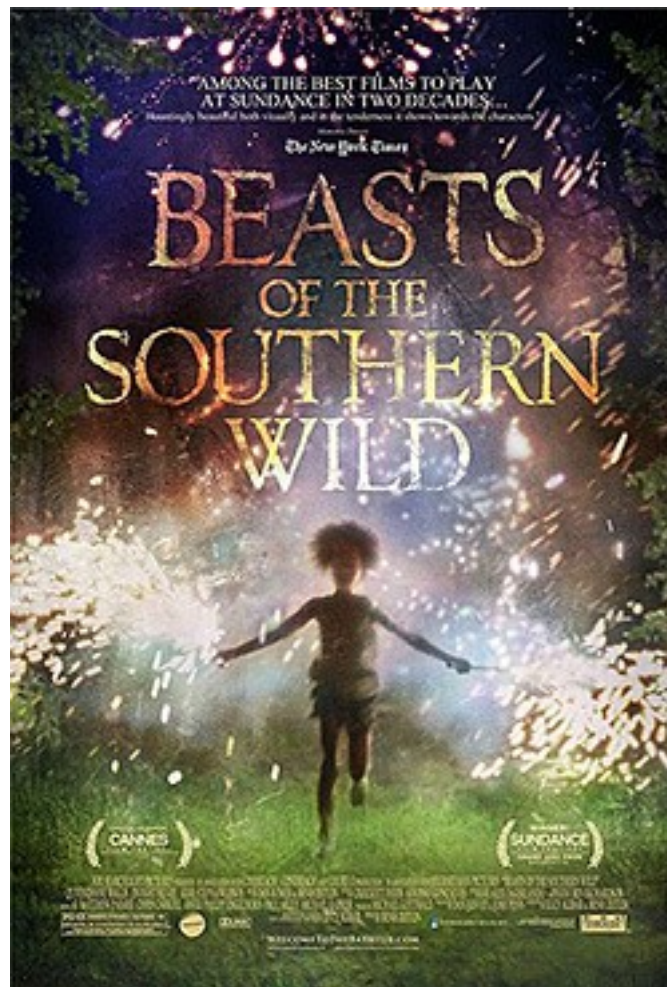
or

["Katrina +5: An X-Code Exhibition," Dorothy Moya, Southern Spaces](#)

Third Five-page Review Essay Due: 4/22 Review of *Southern Spaces* (<https://southernspaces.org/publication-type/presentation>) Presentations--pick one of the events/conferences/interviews/presentations and write an analytical review with reference to 3 other readings or documents in this course. Due at beginning of class.

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Week 15: New Directions



4/25 *Beasts of the Southern Wild*

[\(trailer\)](#)

4/27 *Beasts of the Southern Wild*

[Patricia Yaeger, "Beasts of the Southern Wild and Dirty Ecology,"
Southern Spaces, February 2013](#)

4/29 Review

Week 16: Exam Week--Final Exam Tuesday, May 3, 2016 1:00 p.m.

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Brief Guidelines on Essay Writing:

- Do not use the 1st person
- Avoid generalizations and qualifiers (such as, very, pretty much, sort of)
- Use only the past tense

Essay Grading Guidelines:

What is an "A" paper?

Follows assignment criteria and addresses questions
Contains a well-written, clearly presented thesis statement
Contains clearly organized and fully developed arguments in every area of the paper--
balanced with evidence for each major argument
Includes a range and depth of sources and evidence to support arguments
Ideas demonstrate thought beyond the obvious
Very few or no grammar mistakes, superior style, polished prose
"A+" grade: the paper demonstrates exceptional thought beyond the obvious
"A-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for an A grade, but with some
deficiency in one area.

What is a "B" paper?

Follows assignment criteria and addresses questions
Contains a thesis statement
Contains clearly organized arguments
Slightly underdeveloped arguments
Includes necessary sources and evidence to support the argument, but without the range
and breadth of an A paper
Avoids summarizing and repetition
Some grammar or spelling errors
"B+" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for an "A" paper, but is deficient in
two areas
"B-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "B" paper, but with some
additional deficiency in one area.

What is a "C" paper?

Follows assignment criteria and attempts to address questions
Thesis statement is unclear
Arguments are identifiable, but not clearly organized
Arguments are too brief and underdeveloped

Few (minimum required) sources and evidence to support the main points

Unnecessary summarization and repetition

Several grammar and spelling mistakes

"C+" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "B" paper, but is deficient in two areas

"C-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "C" paper, but with some additional deficiency in one area.

What is a "D" paper?

Does not follow assignment criteria and does not address questions

Arguments are not identifiable

Arguments are not developed

Sources are few (at minimum or below) and/or improperly used

Several grammar and spelling mistakes

"D+" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for an "C" paper, but is deficient in two areas

"D-" grade: the paper demonstrates all of the criteria for a "D" paper, but with some additional deficiency in one area.

What is an "F" paper?

Does not follow assignment criteria and does not address questions

There are no arguments

Few or no sources identified

Severe grammar and spelling mistakes

Evidence of plagiarism is an automatic failing grade, regardless of paper quality